

Summary of the National Register of Historic Places Nominations to be reviewed for approval at the July 21, 2016 Board of State History Meeting

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Fitzgerald House:

The Fitzgerald House, constructed in 1898, is a 1½-story brick Victorian Eclectic residence on Fort Street in Draper, Utah. The house is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Agriculture for its association with the rise of sheep ranching families in Draper at the turn of the twentieth century. The period of significance spans the productive lives of sheep ranchers, Aurelius W. and Nellie Brown Fitzgerald, and their son, Aurelius B. Fitzgerald, from 1898 to 1960. The prosperity of Draper ranchers during this period is represented by four Victorian-era mansions along Fort Street. Built around the same time as the mansions, the Fitzgerald House is more modest in scale, but features Victorian Eclectic ornamentation similar to its larger neighbors. Both Aurelius W. and Aurelius B. married late in life and the home represents the unpretentious aspirations of Draper's bachelor ranchers and farmers. Aurelius W. Fitzgerald maintained a large herd during the height of the sheep and wool industry in Draper. His son, Aurelius B. Fitzgerald, who operated a small dairy farm, was part of a transition in the community from large livestock holdings to specialized agriculture and cottage industries after the depression. The house is eligible under the Multiple Property Submission, Historic and Architectural Resources of Draper, Utah, 1849–1954. The associated historic contexts are “Railroads, Mercantilism, and Farming and Ranching Period, 1877-1917” and Twentieth-Century Community Development and Poultry Industry Period, 1918-1954.” The Fitzgerald House has excellent historic integrity and is a contributing resource along Fort Street in Draper.

Reddick Hotel/Ophir LDS Meetinghouse:

Mining for precious metals in Utah began in 1862 when soldiers from Fort Douglas under the command of Colonel Patrick E. Connor staked claims in the canyons southeast and southwest of Salt Lake City. Many of the men were experienced prospectors from the California gold rush, and by the late 1860s numerous mining districts had been established in the Utah Territory, although mining did not become commercially successful in Utah until after the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869. In 1865, the soldiers began exploring East Canyon (later Ophir Canyon) after reports that Native Americans had previously worked the area to make gold and silver trinkets, as well as silver and lead bullets.

A mining camp of canvas tents, log cabins, and whipsaw lumber shacks quickly grew parallel to Bates Creek (later Ophir Creek) as prospectors rushed to the canyon to stake claims. The Ophir Mining District was organized in 1870 with the name taken from the geographical location of King Solomon's mines. More than 2,500 mining claims had been staked at Ophir by 1871. That year Ophir's population reached 1,200. By the time a town site plat was filed with Tooele County in April 1873, the town had a thriving commercial district along Main Street with stores, saloons, brothels, restaurants, a hotel, a post office, and a Methodist church. Most of the commercial buildings featured false fronts facing Main Street, the only road through the canyon.

Residences were built on short streets that paralleled Main Street and up and down both sides of the canyon. A Salt Lake City newspaper article published in April 1871 referred to the town as “Ophir City” and described it as “flourishing and rapidly increasing.” A town hall/firehouse was built around 1870. The Ophir Town Hall was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983 (NRIS #83003193). In 1874, the Utah Gazetteer had 119 business listings for the town, which it described as the “business centre” of the Ophir Mining District. In 1874, the Lawrence Brothers Mercantile, the only surviving stone commercial building in Ophir was completed. The building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2013 (NRIS #13000842). The population of Ophir rose and fell with the associated mining activity. In the first half of the twentieth century, a second wave of miners lived in the town and the population increased from 295 in 1900 to 522 in 1920, which was the peak of the town’s population in the twentieth century, but only a third of the population from the initial mining activity in the 1870s.